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To my Sister-friend.

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With sincerest and best wishes

for Christmas & the coming year.

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TRUE WOMANHOOD

BY

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HON. FELLOW OF CAIUS COLLEGE, FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE,
AND VICAR OF GREAT S. MARY'S, CAMBRIDGE

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	The Power of Woman	5
II.	Marriage as a Vocation	11
III.	Motherhood	17
IV.	Woman's Work	23
V.	Woman as a Teacher	30
VI.	Woman's Mission	38

TRUE WOMANHOOD.

I.

THE POWER OF WOMAN.

"There is not such a woman from one end of earth to the other, both for beauty of face and wisdom of words." — JUDITH xi. 21.

THE Bible is primarily a revelation of God to man; but it is also more than that; it is to be read for example of life and instruction of manners, and it is full of wisdom about the strength and the weakness of human nature. And so it is that, as we turn over its pages, we come again and again on incidents which illustrate that strange factor in human affairs, — the marvellous power of woman. It was not only Judith who roused the fainting spirits of her countrymen, and went forth boldly to destroy the common foe; a similar part had been played by Deborah long before. Their own faith was high, their personal courage was undaunted; but — and this is the main thing — they had also the marvellous power of kindling in others something of their own enthusiasm.

Though power such as this may be used for good, and has been so used, yet we should remember that it may also be used for evil. Like some of the great forces of nature, we can best feel how mighty it is when we note

the destruction it has sometimes wrought, — the forest trees which a storm has rent to pieces, or the wrecks which rot on the shore of the sea. We may recall how the mighty hero, before whom the bravest of the Philistines had succumbed, was himself vanquished and bereft of all his strength through the arts of Delilah. Assuredly the power of woman is seen, not only in noble triumphs, in heroism and glory, but also when it destroys and degrades, and brings to shame.

There are two somewhat obvious ways in which the power of woman is most commonly brought to bear, — by sympathy and by scorn. Sympathy with aims and aspirations may give so much encouragement, and plant new hopes in those who were losing heart; she who can thus call forth the energies of others is endowed with the greatest power that is given to any on earth. Sympathy is far more effective than that other influence which woman wields by her scorn; yet we may feel how effective this weapon has been in her hands, and how it has goaded men to abandon the guidance of their better nature.

We see it all through the Bible story: we read how Ahab was taunted by a woman, who won for him, by foulest means, the plot of ground he coveted but dared not take. We read of Herod, shamed by a child into the murder of St. John the Baptist; and, strangest of all, of that born leader of men who took from the first a foremost place among the apostles; who was ready to strike a blow against any odds on behalf of his Master; and dared to follow, quietly but steadily, to the place of trial while others fled. Yet St. Peter was afraid of a girl's mocking voice and jeering laugh, and he denied his Lord.

We may say that those who thus yielded were terribly to blame, and that it is disgraceful for any man to be so weak; but, none the less, we may feel how strong was the influence before which they fell. Scorn is woman's least potent weapon; it may punish, it may drive, but it cannot win or lead; it is by sympathy that she works most effectively, and influences the strongest natures; yet even by her scorn she may sometimes assert her power.

It is often said in regard to political affairs that the possession of great power is a great responsibility, and, indeed, a great temptation. There have been so many men who have been carried away by the respect paid to their greatness, and whose heads have been turned by the sense of power. As we remember the adulation of Herod's courtiers, or the overweening conceit of Nebuchadnezzar, we may feel that vanity is the besetting sin of those who find themselves possessed of power.

And can we suppose that a woman, who realizes that she, too, wields a marvellous power of swaying the wills and lives of men, is exempt from this temptation? May not the possession of power, or the very possibilities of power which she feels within herself, tempt her to be vain? — vain of her beauty, or her goodness, or her brilliance, or any other gift on which her power seems to be based.

For, indeed, all power is a dangerous possession — dangerous to those who have it and pride themselves on it; dangerous to those who are without it, but aim at it, and long for it, and are roused to jealousy. Only when we remember how great the power of woman is, and her need of guarding against the temptations that beset a throne, do we see the appositeness of all these phrases in

the epistles in which St. Paul warns against self-assertion and vanity, — the vanity of beautiful women, who yet need "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit," or the self-assertion of clever women, who had best strive "to learn in silence with all subjection." The apostle gave a special warning, and put the Christian women of all generations on their guard against the special temptations of those who wield great power.

Nor is it hard to see the wisdom of the warning. It is the irony of fate that so many sins bring their own punishment; and pride of power has often wrought its undoing, as the arrogance of Rehoboam occasioned the rebellion which severed his kingdom in two. And any suspicion of vanity may sap the foundations of a woman's power. The vanity of a beautiful woman may detract so much from the charm of her loveliness. The pretentiousness of clever, energetic women, who betray the limits of their own experience of life as they lay down the law, may render their real abilities ridiculous.

For self-consciousness and self-complacency, and self-sufficiency and self-assertion, — vanity of every sort, — are incompatible with that sympathy for others and feeling for them in which a woman's deepest and most lasting power shows itself. The more she seems to be living for herself, the less can she wield the power that belongs to those who really live for others.

Yes, it is in sympathy that the secret of a woman's power lies; the sympathy which re-echoes, and responds to, and encourages, any desire or aspiration or activity, and gives it double power for good or for evil. For a woman's sympathy may work in either way, — to strengthen the lower impulses of man and degrade him,

or to call forth his better nature, and render his whole being nobler and finer.

There are women, empty, frivolous, idle, who are absorbed in the daintinesses of life, and are only trying how to please themselves, and they can only sympathize with a man in his empty, frivolous, idle hours; they are ready to share in pleasure and amusement, perhaps in sinful excesses, but they are undisciplined themselves; they have no interest in a man's honest toil, and no appreciation of the strength he displays in battling with the world. And their sympathy and influence may be strong, but it must degrade; for it can only distract from duty, and minister to passion and self-indulgence.

There are other women who are ready to enter into all the joys of others, great or small, and are willing to share their sorrows too; and some of them have a deep purpose in their own lives, — they seek not to win aught for themselves, but just to please God; and with this high aim they go the steady round of little unpretentious tasks that make so much of a woman's life. They never shirk or scamp a duty, though they never parade it; and they are women — unselfish and true to the good they know, and eager to do it — whose sympathy can call forth all that is best in a man; their bravery wakens manly effort, the fellow-feeling of their patience encourages to perseverance. The knights who wear their tokens ride forth undaunted to the battle of life, and returning as victors will ask for no better reward than their approval.

And therefore, as I think of all the power that is within the grasp of women, I cannot but wonder how they will use it. There are searching questions which they would do well to ask themselves. What stuff are

they made of? What can they understand and enter into? So much depends on what they are, on the qualities they possess and admire, and that their very presence calls forth. Are they able to appreciate what is best, or only that which is petty and sensuous, and least worthy of man?

There was a woman once who was marked out from all others on earth, and all generations have called her blessed. The Virgin Mary had a wonderful place assigned her, but she was not vain of her privileges; God exalted the humble and meek. She had no thought of herself at all; when the message came, she unhesitatingly, fearlessly, dedicated herself to God; "Behold the handmaid of the Lord!" she said. And thus it was that she could, in a measure, sympathize with her dear Son, who had come to dedicate his life to God — to be obedient unto death. She could, to some extent, enter into his mission, and understand the glory of it, and encourage him in it; she pondered in her heart all that concerned him; she watched for the first manifestation of his divine power at Cana; she stood by the cross, if her presence might support him in his dying agonies, heedless of her own sorrow, self-forgetful, self-sacrificing too.

And the women who walk in her footsteps are blessed still, blessed in every generation as it comes and goes; unselfish, unsullied, unstinting in their own devotion, their sympathy sustains all that is most noble and godly in other lives. For they, too, are the handmaids of the Lord, and strive to use the gifts and graces with which he has dowered them, not for themselves, but in his service and to his glory.

II.

MARRIAGE AS A VOCATION.

"There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: and both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage." — St. John ii. 1, 2.

When we once realize that the power of woman is chiefly exercised by sympathy, we may see a justification for the trite remark that "woman's true sphere is the home;" it is there that she has the opportunity of exercising, to best purpose and in its fullest extent, her distinctive and special gifts. Many women possess qualities that enable them to excel in other departments of life, — as administrators or teachers or artists. But we are not so much concerned for the moment with the special talents of individual human beings, as with the distinctive power of woman as woman. And her personal sympathy can hardly be displayed in a very wide circle; it is most effective when concentrated within narrow limits, — the sphere of home.

Not only may a woman, by ready sympathy at every turn, obtain a large share in every part of her husband's thoughts and activities and interests till she exercises a constant and welcome sway over his whole life; for while her influence exercised at home thus attains its greatest intensity, it also has the widest influence; there is no limit of distance in time to which it may not indirectly extend.

The mother who, by her loving care, helps to shape the destiny of a little child, is leaving her mark on the next generation, and through it on those that are yet to come. The bent which she gives to the child's mind and life will show itself in manhood and womanhood, to be passed on, and affect for good or for evil the lives that shall be, when she is long forgotten. The home is a narrow sphere, it seems a little place; but, at least, influence there has infinite importance when we estimate it in terms of time.

What, then, is the basis of this home-life — that which is the most appropriate sphere for the exercise of womanly power? It is not a mere human contrivance — a civil contract; it is the ordinance of God, not a human arrangement dictated by considerations of convenience and expediency. Just as we believe that the Church is divinely founded, and is not a mere association formed of persons who happen to think alike, that it is not an association which may be reconstituted from time to time in accordance with the wishes of the members; so do we believe that marriage is an estate instituted by God. We believe in one Catholic and Apostolic Church into which we may enter, from which we may sinfully sever ourselves, but with which we dare not tamper, since it is Christ's, not ours.

So, too, we are taught that Christian marriage is not a mere voluntary partnership, but a holy estate instituted by God. We may enter it, or we may refrain from entering it; but we dare not alter its terms or its constitution at our pleasure. Civil unions are agreements between contracting parties, who frame the terms of the partnership, and who may sometimes claim to break the tie they have formed. But Christian marriage is God's

institution, not ours; and if we enter it, we must abide by God's rule.

Statisticians are continually telling us that there is a large number of women in the world for whom the career of married life is not open. Equality of opportunity is only a dream of the Socialist; there are many women from whom the opportunity of using their powers in the most effective and far-reaching fashion is withheld.

But this only renders it all the more important that those who have that opportunity should make the most of it; and this they can never do unless they learn to think of marriage, not as a career to be taken up and then dropped if it cannot be made to pay, but as a holy estate instituted by God, to be entered at his call, and to be a sphere of doing God service.

Marriage, with all its great opportunities, is misused by those who enter into it without a vocation; it is the world, and not the Church, which speaks as if there were an obligation for women to marry, and as if the lives of other women were failures; as if marriage were a career that every self-respecting woman would try to adopt — not a sphere of responsibility which she ought not to undertake without a vocation. The Church has even been blamed for appearing to disparage matrimony; and if there has ever been exaggeration of this sort, we may yet remember that it is the exaggeration of truths which St. Paul taught.

Marriage is an estate which may offer help in avoiding certain gross sins, but it also gives rise to anxieties that may interfere with the single-hearted service of God. It ought to be a serious thought with every Christian, whether he or she is right to enter this holy

estate at all, or whether they can serve God better in other circumstances. And this duty of careful consideration is accentuated by the fact that those who enter the holy estate of matrimony are only received into Christian marriage if they consent to take life-long vows. How many there are who decry brotherhoods and sisterhoods on the ground, forsooth, that they object to irrevocable vows, while yet they would apparently have little scruple in taking those life-long vows in the Marriage Service, which testify that married life is not to be undisciplined; there is to be self-repression and self-denial.

The Church would have us know, and feel, that if vows are needed to test and support a man's resolution in undertaking the priestly office, they are not less necessary for those who enter on the responsibilities and anxieties of marriage as God instituted it and Christ approved it.

So many have never thus thought of marriage as being the sphere in which those women who are called to it can serve God to best purpose, that we can hardly be surprised at the frequent complaint that marriage is a failure. There are girls who seem to look to it chiefly as a means of escaping from their old homes; marriage may seem to offer the only way of shaking off restrictions imposed in childhood, which have come to be galling; they wish to live in a home of their own, and to be the centre of a circle, with one devoted slave to carry out their behests. And thus they may be tempted to take an irrevocable step, not reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God, but recklessly; they may make the most solemn, life-long vow heedlessly and thoughtlessly, as if it were an unmeaning form.

Any one who thinks of matrimony as opening the way to opportunities of self-assertion and self-pleasing is doomed to disappointment; in so far as she is self-centred and self-seeking, she must, sooner or later, alienate a husband whom she might have bound to her closely by her sympathy. For women who cherish their own ambitions, and pursue their own pleasures; who show themselves jealous of a husband's work, and grudge the time bestowed on it; who are careless about his successes unless they bring in money to spend, while they despise his recreations — for such there can only be the disillusionment of discovering that they are of little account in the sphere where they might have reigned supreme; they lay in store for themselves the disappointment which comes from broken vows, and from carelessly misusing the ordinance of God.

There are many women in these days who cherish the ambition of pursuing an independent career; there seems to be no duty to keep them at home as girls, and they wish to have a place of their own and work of their own in the world. They want to live their own lives; perhaps they do not all realize how hard the struggle of battling with the world may prove; but I cannot but welcome the new openings which may enable a woman to work on self-dependent lines — if she really cherishes independence in heart, and is not willing to sacrifice it to any one at all.

Such self-reliant, independent women have no vocation for marriage, since the Christian woman who enters the holy estate of matrimony is called upon to lay down all these ambitions for an independent career; she is not to live her own life for the future, but to be a helpmeet. She is to resign the claim to an independent career and

an equal voice, and to be content to help another — a lowly aim, a humble task, yet surely not a contemptible one in the eyes of those who remember that Christ came to earth, not to do his own will, or live his own life, but to serve.

That example of willing service may be an inspiration to those who have vowed, as married women, to relinquish their own personal ambitions, and to make it the chief aim of their lives to help another — perchance in his work, and certainly in his home. There can only be unrest and embittered battling with circumstances for those women who seek to maintain an independent life and independent ambitions within the married state; but those who are content to abide by God's ordinance may know the calm and the blessing which is the guerdon of those who seek humbly and faithfully to walk in his way.

Christian marriage may be slighted; its inequalities may cause offence; its apparent failure may be the subject of common talk. At least, we cannot cure such evils by treating the rite more lightly, as if it were only an unmeaning ceremony clothing a civil union. Rather let us be more earnest in regarding God's ordinance as God's indeed, and the vows made in God's presence as binding on the thoughts, as well as in the life; so will the blessing pronounced in God's name be the harbinger of the peace he gives to all those who love his law, and are not offended at it.

III.

MOTHERHOOD.

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." — ACTS xx. 35.

So much of the gospel tradition has been embodied for us in the fourfold record of our Lord's life, that there is special interest about a saying which has reached us through another channel. We cannot hope to know anything of the incidents which may have served as the occasion of this remark, or of the context of the discourse in which it may have occurred; for it is a mere quotation that stands by itself in St. Paul's address to his Ephesian friends: "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." It is a significant saying: to give is more blessed, but it is not nearly so pleasant. It is far more pleasant to receive, — to receive plenty of money to spend on ourselves, or plenty of kindness to make the time pass cheerfully; that is the way to enjoy ourselves, to have most pleasure, and to get most out of life.

Still, somehow or other, the course that offers most pleasure does not content us; it does not lead to anything, and it does not last. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing.

The Preacher was not the only man who has tried all kinds of pleasure and exhausted them, and felt utterly *blasé*, — who has complained that life is empty, and only

yields vexation of spirit. And when we recall the experience of such as he, we may perhaps be more able to understand something of the contrast, and to appreciate the blessedness of those who give, and set themselves to use their lives for others. They may come to see joy and wisdom and strength among friends around them; they may know in their hearts that these have been brought about through their effort and sacrifice, and are thus their gifts to their generation. To see the prosperity of others wrought by their own self-sacrifice and pains is the reward of those who give, and it may afford them not pleasure merely, but blessedness.

There is a strange story in the Book of Ecclesiastes which seems to point the contrast. We read of a poor, wise man who lived in a city that was besieged by a great king; and he, by his wisdom, delivered the city. He did not receive anything; they gave him no gifts of money to reward him, though he needed it sorely; they did not honor him while he lived, he was unheeded and forgotten; they raised no monument when he was dead, and his name is all unknown. He got nothing at all for himself; and yet, because he was so wise, I think he would feel that he was blessed in his deed.

In every household that had escaped the horrors of death and lust and pillage and captivity, which war brings in its train, there would be the results of his deed; he could not but see how greatly it had been blessed, since the continued life of the whole city, in peace and well-being, was the fruit of his efforts. It was a blessed thing to know that so much prosperity and happiness had been brought about through him, even though only a little share of it came his own way.

Such a story as this gives us a sort of parable of the

life of the eternal God. He has no need of us, or of any of our gifts; we cannot add, as it were, to his pleasure. "God dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life and breath, and all things." Yes, God's life is a life of giving, of giving to us our very being, our health and strength and powers, and all that we have; and to see these gifts rightly used, to see his power and goodness reflected in the glories of nature and the holiness of saintly lives, that is God's greatest happiness.

The life of God is not a round of pleasure; it is a blessed life, because it is a life not of receiving, but of giving, of calling into being and providing for all that is; of rejoicing in creation, because it is very good; of rejoicing over man, restored from sin and redeemed from evil by his love. In a song that tells of all the things that God has made, and their dependence on him, the Psalmist describes how it is by God's constant giving they are kept alive at all, and sums it up in the words, "The glorious majesty of the Lord shall endure for ever; the Lord shall rejoice in his works."

Let us take this thought with us, and turn from things heavenly to that which is earthly; it may perchance help us to feel where the great dignity and glory of motherhood lie. Surely it is in this, that the mother is called not to live for herself, or to seek her own pleasure, but to be ever caring for and watching over those who are dependent on her for life and every earthly thing — in all reverence I say it, as God does. It is not hers to receive, but to give; there may be so very little pleasure in her life; she may have so little she can spare to spend on herself; so little time to give to

her own enjoyments; she gets so very little, not even much thanks, for all she does.

It cannot be a pleasant life, when there is so little to receive, and when there are such constant calls for her to give. She must give her own strength to the child she bears and nurtures; she must give her wakeful nights after weary days to soothe its pains; she must give her patient care to calm its fretfulness; she must give her constant thought to its training. It is hers still to give and give; there are so many and such unending demands on her love.

Yet hers may be a blessed life too, as the children grow up around her, and she sees in their lives, in their efforts and their successes, the fruit of her own pains — of all that she has given. It is not in her own life, but in the promise and prosperity of theirs, that she has her reward; she may be thankfully proud of the men and women she has reared, and feel that, though she has missed so much of the pleasure of life, she has been greatly blessed. Her sacrificing love may find in its own sphere a dim reflection of the joy of our redeeming Lord, who shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.

When we have once grasped the great difference between a life that aims at receiving — getting money and pleasure — and a life that aims at giving — at giving help and care and sympathy and love; and that, just because it gives so much and so freely, is a blessed life — we find the secret of so much of our discontent and failure. God calls mothers pre-eminently — as indeed he calls all human beings — to a life that is to be like his own, a life of giving, — of giving care and thought and sympathy and help.

It is in the life of giving, and only in it, that we can

be really blessed. But though in our better moments we may rise to this level for a time, and feel that to do good, and sustain others, and help them, is the best we can aim at, — the one thing really worth living for, — we get so weary in well-doing; we want not only to have the blessedness of giving, but the pleasure of getting as well.

We grumble because we get so little, — so little leisure, so little enjoyment, so little thanks. But remember, God is satisfied with the joy of giving, the joy of seeing his will accomplished in the world, his hopes realized in his creatures. Let us pray him to give us grace to be content with this also, with the blessedness of seeing the results of our patience and watching and prayers in other lives, — their vigor, their prosperity, their triumphs, — not our own. Cannot we strive to be satisfied with happiness like that of the great God who rejoices in his works?

Nor should we only seek to let the thought of God inspire us to generosity in giving; it may guide us, too, in seeing what we ought to give. He prepared the earth for man, and has given us all things richly to enjoy; but he has not let us be unchecked and uncontrolled in using or misusing what he has provided for us. Fallen man has not been left to ruin himself utterly by his caprice and self-indulgence; God has sought so patiently and carefully to train him, has set himself at such infinite cost to win him to that divine life for which he was created — in God's own image. And for children, inheriting tendencies to evil, we dare not provide a mere paradise where every whim may be gratified and every caprice indulged; there must be training and discipline to check what is evil; there must be tender carefulness to win them to what is best.

It is sad to see a garden ruined with weeds, or indeed to see anything spoiled or wasted; and the more it costs, the greater is the pity. Only mothers know what a costly thing a child is, — the burden, the pain, the strain, the self-denial and anxiety, all that a child costs its mother; and only mothers know how pitiable it is to see a spoiled child, — a child that has no idea of giving help to others, of giving love in return for love, and that only thinks of getting what it likes to eat, or to wear, or to amuse it — of getting its own way.

It is no light thing for parents to set themselves to train children, as our Father in heaven has trained mankind; it is only by God's help that we can avoid the opposite dangers, of habitual indulgence which allows evil to grow, and of the hardness which makes all duty repulsive. Only through God's grace can we teach them to see the beauty of the life of giving, — of giving pleasure to others, of giving help and sympathy and care, so that in manhood and in womanhood they, too, may be blessed.

IV.

WOMAN'S WORK

"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."—St. John v. 17.

It is not quite easy to say exactly what is implied in the word "work;" we can easily contrast it with various opposites, but we are not all able to state precisely what we mean by it. We may distinguish it from leisure — our working days from our holidays; we may contrast the hard manual toil of the working classes with the sedentary occupations of other social grades; or we may apply the term to human efforts that have a definite result, while spasmodic and ill-directed activity is comparatively fruitless.

From any of these ordinary points of view we might doubt whether our Lord, during the years of his earthly ministry, was really working. He wandered about, beset in some places with crowds appealing for help, but master of his own time, and with long periods of retirement. He had forsaken a life of manual toil when he began his ministry; and the fruit of his labors seemed quite insignificant when he hung on the cross at Calvary. Yet he rightly claimed to be working all the time; every day and all day he was about his Father's business, and thus he was personally giving effect to the purpose of God.

His life, then, seems to set before us the real meaning of work, — not merely what it is not, but what it

is, — and to teach us that all those are working who are giving effect to God's purpose by any activity, manual or mental. "Lo, I come," he said, "to do thy will, O God."

Those who do not follow their own fancies and aspirations, but bend their minds to give active expression to the will of their Master, are doing their work in that state of life to which God has called them. Theirs is the only work worth doing, for it only can last; energy which spends itself in disregard of God's purpose must be futile and wasted.

"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." It is strange to think of the infinite God — so far above us — as working steadily through all the ages of time for one great end. We read of God preparing and garnishing a home for man in the work of Creation; we read of our Lord breaking the chains of death and the power of sin in the work of Redemption; we believe in the power of God's Spirit building up a holy temple by the working of Grace. And so the new creation looms before us, and we see how one great purpose underlies all the story of the ages; the divine idea slowly actualizes itself as God's will is done upon earth; and all who, consciously or unconsciously, lend themselves and their activities to the accomplishment of God's great purpose have found their work in the world, and are doing it.

Here, too, we may have a glimpse of the dignity of work and the glory of it; so few of us take this truth to heart. To give effect to God's will in any sphere, however humble, is to be a fellow-worker with him. Every menial or manual task is concerned in rendering some earthly place or thing more fit for man's use; it is the carrying out of the purpose of God in creation. All

patient attention to the monotonous round of trivial duties is at least an act of self-discipline, and training for the more ready service of God. Wherever and whenever we do anything to actualize God's purpose in the world, or render ourselves more conformable to his will, we are acting as fellow-workers with him.

Such thoughts have power to heal the soreness and lighten the burden of life from day to day and hour to hour. There are so many of us who do our work not as sons, but as slaves; it would make such a difference if we could only realize that in every task assigned us we are about our Father's business. There must be drudgery in work, if we resent it and do it grudgingly; there may be happiness in any work, if we can consciously realize that therein and thereby we are at one with God.

It is hard for any of us to kick against the pricks; to go on day after day feeling that we are misunderstood and underrated, and that what is given us to do is beneath us. Our life may cease to be a burden and drudgery, if we can set about the very same round in the name of the Lord Jesus, content to do our best since we are fellow-workers with him.

This same thought may also effect a revolution in our ideals and aims; we are naturally repelled by the dull drudgery of work, and we idealize leisure; we crave time to spend as we like, in our recreations it may be, or perhaps in the development of our faculties and powers. Some make haste to be rich that they may be free from the calls of business, and be able to retire from its constant strain. And leisure so earned may be well spent in cultivating tastes and acquiring knowledge; there is much that is attractive in such an ideal of cultured ease; it corresponds to the best conception of life to which

Paganism and Judaism attained; but it is not Christian.

As Christians, our ideal of life is found not in leisure, but in work; since we have learned that we are called on to share in the work of God. To grasp this Christian conception is to see that work is not merely a duty to be done because we must; it is the privilege of the sons of God.

The penalty imposed on fallen man at the gates of Paradise was a blessing in disguise, and Christ will give us light to see in our own toil the means of daily inheriting a blessing. But like health, or other common things, we scarcely value this blessing unless it is withdrawn. Those who have lost the power of working through sickness, or are deprived of the opportunity of working by circumstances, know how bitter it is to be condemned to involuntary idleness. The poor man is tempted to despair when he sees no prospect of earning the reward of work, — when his willing hands hang idle, and he cannot ward off hunger and misery from his home. Perhaps it is almost as bitter to feel that the life and powers we possess are useless in the world, that nobody wants them, and that there is nothing for us to do. To be thus condemned to enforced inaction is to be debarred from the privilege of being a fellow-worker with God.

This Christian doctrine of work has importance in another fashion, — it helps us to see the heinousness of the sin of idleness. Some of us hardly realize that it is a sin at all; it may be so graceful, it is so pleasant, that we are ready to excuse it, in ourselves at any rate. But it is a sin, — a sin against God, since we forego the privilege of working for and with him. It is a sin against our neighbor, since we neglect to do our part in the service of

man; the idle are ready to enjoy what comes to hand, but make no contribution in return. It is, besides, a sin against ourselves; since we deliberately reject the best means of self-discipline, and prefer instead to go our own ways and please ourselves. It is the fruitful source of every kind of evil.

During the last hundred years, there has been a series of remarkable and sudden changes, which have raised innumerable new difficulties in regard to woman's work. A great deal of what she used to do has been taken out of her hands, and is done under changed conditions. The work which was formerly carried on by women and girls in their own homes is now concentrated in factories and shops. Till a century ago the spinning of wool was quite a common employment in cottages all over England, and spinning fine yarn for household requirements was practised by the wives and daughters of the gentry.

These occupations have been entirely withdrawn from cottages, while domestic brewing and baking and laundry work are less practised than they were. The more refined household arts — preserving fruits or preparing scents — have also come to be taken up as trades; and the housewife has been left with far less on her hands than the typical woman of the Proverbs, or in England a century ago.

So many domestic arts have died out, and so many household avocations have been superseded, that girls, who in the old days would have been fully occupied, now find there is nothing for them to do at home. That many girls obtain employment in factories, in spinning or weaving, or in other ways, is true enough; but it is also true that their work is done under conditions which differ greatly from those in vogue a century ago. At

that time these employments served as a natural apprenticeship to prepare a girl for a useful life in a home of her own; under the new conditions they no longer serve the same purpose; the habits she forms as a factory-worker may even be injurious, and render a woman less fit for the dulness and restraint of domestic life.

The limitation of female occupation at home, which has come about through the introduction of machinery and organization of factories, is to many a matter of regret. It has raised a problem which many women are forced to face, — How are they to fulfil the duty of working? They feel that it is a duty to earn their own living, and not to be dependent on the generosity of friends; but it is so hard to see how to do it.

There is wonderful heroism in the unostentatious bravery with which some women and girls strive to fulfil this duty; for the difficulties that have to be faced and lived down by women who are trying to strike out a path for themselves and survive in the struggle for existence are well-nigh insuperable. And while we recognize the courage in these efforts, we may remember the pathos of it all. These lives have so little before them; the power of sustaining work at high pressure cannot last forever; and declining days, when the best strength is spent, may be terribly lonely and cheerless and poverty-stricken.

Since the duty of work is not merely incumbent on those who are poor and have to earn their living, but on all of us in every rank, there is another aspect in which the problem presents itself to many women to-day, — How are they to avoid the sin of idleness? In a world where there is so much ignorance and suffering and sin, there is plenty of work for God that needs doing, and

that cannot be remunerated; it might surely be possible for some of the women who are at ease to rise up and do it.

But those who respond to such an appeal, and take up occupations and activities of any sort — literary, philanthropic, or religious — would do well to remember that these tasks are not rightly and worthily executed unless they are done as work, and in the spirit of workers. They must first of all set themselves to do what comes to their hand, heartily, as to the Lord; not in a dilettante spirit, but as privileged to be fellow-workers with God.

Again, they must see that they are mindful of their duty to their neighbors, especially that they do not indirectly and injudiciously underbid their struggling sisters by voluntary, unpaid work. And last of all, it were well to remember that in real work there is self-discipline; everything that brings a woman into notoriety is at least open to suspicion, — there must be a very plain call of duty before she enters voluntarily on such a course. For there is a real danger of self-deception. She may be very busy, her undertaking may be very arduous, it may have the notice of newspapers, and the admiration of little cliques and committees; but a task which tends to self-glorification, and is lacking in the element of self-discipline, is not done as work, and in the spirit of that Master who took upon him the form of a servant.

V.

WOMAN AS A TEACHER.

"And Jesus called a little child and set him in the midst, and said, . . . Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me, but whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

St. Matt. xviii. 2, 5, 6.

There is no vocation to which women, who are forced or inclined to launch out on an independent career, are more likely to betake themselves than that of teaching. Many departments of education, especially the training of the very young, are, by common consent, almost exclusively in their hands. The first attempts at formal instruction, and the earliest efforts at exercising another discipline than that of home, are chiefly committed to the charge of women.

When we remember how enormously important first impressions are, how deeply early habits are rooted, how retentive children's memories may prove, we cannot but feel that the influence exercised by women teachers on the future of their country is only second in importance to that of the mothers themselves. But from the words of our Lord which I have just quoted, we may learn that he takes a higher standpoint than that of patriotism in bidding us rise to this great responsibility.

He would have us feel that each little child, with all the glorious possibilities of its life, is to be treated as

thoughtfully and reverently as we would deal with our Lord himself, so that, while it grows in years and stature, it may also increase in wisdom, and in favor with God and man.

But it is not only with little children that women teachers have to do; to them also is committed a chief share, if not the exclusive charge, of the education of their own sex in all its stages. They not only lay the first foundations, but they continue the instruction, and do much to build up the characters of our girls. Once again, when we remember the power that women exercise in the world, for good or evil, we may feel the enormous importance of such work as this; to guide the rising generation, as to the aspirations they shall cherish and ideals they shall adopt, is to mould those who will in turn mould the future of our race.

To realize the immense responsibility of these duties, and to undertake them with the conviction that the best energy of life may worthily be devoted to doing them thoroughly, is to set ourselves to work in the right spirit. It is the happiness of the teacher's life that she may so well feel a real enthusiasm for her calling.

There are other tasks in the world — say that of pasting matchboxes — where it is not easy to feel that it matters so very much how the work is done, so long as the pay is honestly earned; we can hardly expect any one to feel so eager about it as to go on doing it from mere love of it. But no one can doubt the infinite importance of doing our best at every turn as teachers; we cannot shut our eyes to the enormous responsibility of such work, and therefore, however mechanical and wearisome it may be, it is yet comparatively easy to brace one's self to the task anew, and do it heartily as unto the Lord. Chris-

tian principles and Christian motives come in, not so much to guide us to what ought to be done, as to infuse new energy into the effort to carry on the work of instruction and of education.

For the teacher who is to be first-rate in the work of instructing others, one primary qualification is necessary, — a genuine regard for learning. Unfortunately this has been, and still is, lamentably wanting among women generally. It is something to be conscious of the enormous range of possible knowledge lying beyond us, which we never can hope to make our own, however much we try, and yet not to become indifferent, but to be eager to press on and on, so far as ever we can.

It is much to cherish the ambition that our knowledge, however small its range may be, shall be thoroughly sound; that our thoughts shall be clear, our information accurate, and that we shall have a mastery over the art of expressing what we mean.

But to be at once eager to increase our knowledge in range and in thoroughness, and delicately sensitive as to its right expression; to be constantly striving, painfully and patiently, to reduce error to a minimum, and to approach nearer to perfection, — that is the temper of the scholar. To love knowledge thus, and to be devoted to really good work in the library or the laboratory, is the purest of earthly passions; and those who have ever had opportunities of constant intercourse with one genuine scholar will surely look back on it as a vivid revelation of what learning means, and what knowledge ought to be.

It is easy enough for gross minds and empty heads to disparage accurate scholarship as if it were useless pedantry; but, indeed, the scholar is the very salt of the

earth, and exercises an influence by which human reason is elevated to be something better than a powerful instrument for satisfying physical needs and grovelling desires. We, doubtless, cannot all feel this pure passion for learning; we cannot all expect to be geniuses of any sort; but, at any rate, those who do not appreciate and admire the enthusiasm for learning when they see it in others are but badly qualified to teach.

It has been, and it is, the grave misfortune in regard to women's education that so few of the teachers have come in contact with genuine scholarship, even indirectly. They are not to be blamed if, through the lack of this influence, they have had a low standard of knowledge, and an imperfect estimate of their limitations; sometimes they seem to have fallen into the habit of teaching dogmatically, as if all knowledge were formulated in cut and dried phrases that could be reproduced in examinations; sometimes into the worse error of posing as omniscient.

There are so many teachers who are afraid to confess they have made a mistake lest it should destroy the pupil's belief in their infallibility. But all instruction that aims at imparting literary or scientific information on the mere authority of the teacher misses the mark. It necessarily fails to convey the one thing that is worth learning; it is of highest importance that we should all get to understand the limits of our own knowledge, and the depths of our own ignorance; should be able to distinguish the things we know really well from the things we know imperfectly, or not at all.

To impart all information in the same fashion, on the personal authority of the teacher, is disastrous. It obliterates all distinction between what is demonstrably

true, what is empirically proved, and what is only probable, and reduces everything to the same dead level of the teacher's opinion. What wonder is it if some of the girls, who wish to enlarge the narrow circle of ideas acquired at school, are tossed rudderless on currents of fashion, and carried about with every wind of doctrine. They are attracted by any opinion that is asserted loudly and vehemently; they may become the prey of every charlatan and noisy quack, because they have never grasped the conception of knowledge as something deeper than a teacher's opinion.

To give instruction is one part of the teacher's task, but the more important duty is to educate; to awaken interest, and to encourage the exercise and consequent development of the faculties. It is a truism to say that the best work consists, not in cramming or putting in, but in drawing out the powers of the pupils themselves.

There may be much technique in the teacher's art, little expedients for maintaining order and fixing attention; but there is only one source of permanent success, — for the teachers to be really interested in the work they are doing. And despite its great importance and responsibility, this is not always easy; it is not possible to be equally interested in every subject, still less, perhaps, in constantly teaching the same subject. It is chiefly by conscientiously trying to advance one's own knowledge beyond the limits of what is required for teaching that personal interest in a subject can be kept fresh.

But even when this flags, it may be possible, by keeping the importance of the work in mind, to find a genuine human interest in each new generation of pupils, —

in their efforts to learn; in helping them to see and to avoid their own mistakes; in keeping before them a really high standard of attainment.

Such personal interest as this is sure to call forth a response of some sort. It gives a sort of encouragement that is far more stimulating than any competition for prizes can ever be. That may be good in its way; there be a chivalrous rivalry among the taught that is most wholesome; but it never can be so effective as the efforts that are called forth by sympathetic teaching.

Yet we should do well to remember that the corruption of what is best may bring about thoroughly bad results. It is not easy to take as much interest in, and to give the needed encouragement to, the dull and stupid, as well as to the clever; but the teacher who makes favorites, and neglects to test impressions by other standards, may, through this one blunder, fall lamentably short of her aims. Just as it is important that instruction should be sound, so is it also important that in the work of education the teacher should be just.

Each of these two sides — instruction and education — has a place in that department of training to which all Christian parents and teachers are alike bound to devote themselves, — the bringing up children in the knowledge and practice of religion. It is necessary, on one hand, to instruct in Christian truth, and on the other hand, to call forth the religious faculty. And just as this branch of the work is of far higher importance than any other, so, too, we may notice that it must necessarily be done in a different fashion — the conditions are quite dissimilar.

The truth which God has revealed to us about himself and about ourselves, and about the relation in which we

stand to him, stands on a different level from all human knowledge, however clear or certain. God's revelation may accord with our philosophy of the universe; it may be confirmed by our experience of life; but its truth rests on the word of the eternal God, accepted by those who have felt its power in their own hearts and lives.

The witness of the Spirit finds a response in human spirits; but such supernatural truth cannot be conveyed as science or history or literary knowledge may be. It must be taught dogmatically, not indeed as a mere opinion, but commended by the force of the teacher's personal convictions, or it had better not be taught at all. Only so can we hope to help the children to believe in the power of unseen realities, to recognize the truth, and to worship as their own God the Father who made each one of his children, the Son who has redeemed each, and the Spirit who is ready to sanctify each.

We want to train them to try to do the will of that unseen Father, and so to have a Christian sense of duty; to desire to lay all the hopes and cares before that God in prayers, and leave them to his love to deal with as his goodness decrees, and so to live a life of faith. But children cannot learn all this by mere instruction in the words of the Bible, or from creeds; supernatural truth must be commended, not only by the lips, but by the life, — by the fact that it is a living power in the hearts and acts of those who speak of it.

So, too, must it be with the education of religious faculty. We cannot teach any one to pray, save as the Lord also taught his disciples, — by not only giving them a form of words to use, but by the earnestness of our own devotion. We must ourselves be reverent if we would incite to reverence — there is no other way; and

that devotion must be genuine. Children are ready to detect small hypocrisies; they are repelled by affectation of every kind.

There is positive mischief in doing anything for the sake of example; they soon find it out; they are ready to suspect that the unreality they have detected runs through the whole of the religious life. Let us beware of the temptation to be guilty of small hypocrisies and of little irreverences, — in biblical jokes or carping comments on what passes at church; for these are things that undermine the faith of little children, and cause them to fall.

VI.

WOMAN'S MISSION.

"Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man." —1 Cor. xi. 9.

In these words St. Paul sets before us, in a terse and epigrammatic fashion, his teaching as to the mission of woman; that is to say, as to the special work in the world which God designed her to do. *The man was not created for the woman, but the woman for the man.* It is a hard saying, to many an offensive saying; but let us at least examine it patiently before we turn away from Christ's apostle to some other teacher, who will give us phrases that may please us better.

St. Paul does not say that woman is to live for man as his drudge and slave, still less to live merely to minister to his caprices and sins. Indeed, she has a far higher mission than that; she may live for man so as to ennoble him, and to help to make him more worthy of his place in God's universe.

The duty of the human race, as set before us in the story of the Creation, is that of making the most of God's earth. To our race has been given dominion over all other creatures; and we are bidden to replenish the earth, and develop its resources, and make it a better abode for the children of men. We read, too, that at the Fall there was assigned to man the special

toil of which agriculture is the type, — the struggle with physical nature, the effort to overcome it, and bring it into subjection to man's rational will, so that he may use it as his servant.

Adam and his sons have had the task of making the most of the earth allotted them; but we are taught that woman's mission is not so much to struggle with physical nature — with thorns and briers — on her own account, as to seek to make the utmost of the noblest of God's created works, — the human race. It is hers to call forth and develop all that is best in humanity. This is the divine mission of woman, and the work which she should set herself to do.

As we recall the subjects which have engaged our attention during the last few weeks, we may feel what a vantage-ground she may have for fulfilling this mission at every epoch of the life, not only of girls, but of boys, as they are reared and trained to take their part in the world. As a *mother*, she is called on to give the best direction to the thoughts and aspirations of the rising generation. As a *teacher*, she has the opportunity of carrying to a further stage the same sort of work with boys and girls, by kindling an admiration for learning, and impressing them more deeply with reverence for God.

As boyhood ripens into manhood, a time comes when the *power of woman* is sure to be strongly felt; the romance of youth is the principal factor in the making or marring of many lives. And, as a wife, she may become a true *helpmeet*, and enable her husband to catch something of the spirit in which she *works*, so as to ply his task in the world more manfully, and to do it heartily as unto the Lord.

These are the opportunities that lie to her hand for fulfilling her divine mission. It is sad, as we review the ages of the world's history, to see how faithless mankind has been in the trust bestowed upon us, so that the earth has been despoiled and its resources wasted; its treasures have been exhausted to no good purpose, and the God-given dominion over the creatures has been capriciously misused, because men have not realized their duty as trustees, or their privilege as fellow-workers with God.

Just in the same fashion we may fear that not a few human lives have been wrecked and wasted, because so many women have failed to remember that they had any mission in life at all, or, if they did realize it, have been so unwise in their efforts to give it effect.

After all, the language of poetry is the language of truth, for it gives beautiful utterance to genuine feeling. The worship and seeming idolatry of woman, which is breathed in so many lyrics, is but an expression of the simple fact that many men have found in some woman the embodiment of an ideal of beauty and of goodness. To them, rightly or wrongly, the highest manifestation of what is divine that has been vouchsafed to their eyes and ears has been enshrined in some human form.

We reverence the departed saints of God because in each generation their lives have given a fresh and vivid manifestion of his will. We reverence them without idolatry because we know that their goodness was the gift of God's grace vouchsafed to them; and we praise him in that he gave us the witness and example of their lives. And so it may be that the goodness or unselfishness of some of God's saints yet on earth may serve as

a convincing demonstration of the existence of unselfishness and purity and holiness, not as words merely, but as living realities, and may kindle the love of them in gross and sordid natures. Nor need there be any taint of sin in the reverence we feel for an earthly object that has been to us a true pledge of the goodness of God, and a vivid revelation of his forgiving love.

Yet surely it may be a perilous thing for any human being to be thus reverenced and admired; the very manner of accepting homage may unconsciously declare that the object is all unworthy. For certainly it is one thing to be enthroned as an ideal, and quite another matter to pose as one. This is the way in which a woman may most readily ruin her influence; it is the terrible folly of good and pious women that they may appear so conscious of their own wisdom and virtue, so self-complacent, so terribly severe on the frailties of others. Just because they have been guarded in Christian homes, just because they may not have needed to measure their strength against others in the battle of life, they may neither know the force of temptation, nor the limits of their own powers. And words thoughtlessly uttered may reveal the fact that a nature which seemed to be a revelation of unselfish goodness is sullied with disdainful self-complacency after all.

For words often tell so much more than they say; the tongue is an unruly member, and common complaint has it that women's words are not few, and are not always fitly chosen. The lips express so much that is not wholly meant, and so much more that were better left unthought as well as unsaid. And the pity of it is that so much mischievous speech is uttered under a mistaken sense of duty.

Some folks are forever finding fault; they seem to discover an agreeable duty in dilating on the follies and failures that come under their notice. In the nearer circle of home they will do so deliberately, and of set purpose; they would think they were careless indeed if they failed to point out where their friends and relations are wrong, and what habits it would be well for them to correct.

But this is a mistaken sense of duty; such fault-finding defeats its own purpose; none have a right to cast stones unless they are either without sin themselves, or have authority to rebuke and punish within some given sphere. The preacher is commissioned to rebuke vice boldly; the magistrate has also to discharge this duty, and be a terror to evil-doers within the sphere of his jurisdiction; the teacher has a similar responsibility in school, and the parents at home, — for each has authority to act. But those who complacently assume authority to find fault with all and sundry are the victims of intolerable self-conceit; they may waken resentment, and lead men to conceal, but not to forsake, what is wrong.

To indulge this habit is, unconsciously perhaps, but not the less really, to set aside our duty towards our fellow-creatures. We are sent into the world to do good; it is not our part to point out evil, or to uproot wickedness, or to bother about it at all. Eradicating evil does not necessarily force the good to grow; it may only leave an empty place where other forms of sin will fix themselves more firmly.

The parable of the tares is conclusive about the mission of the church; but it has been our shame as Christians that in so many ages we have failed to abide by

our Master's teaching. There was a time when the fact that the sacred places in the Holy Land were held by avowed infidels seemed to be a standing disgrace to Christianity, and good men, like St. Bernard, set themselves to remove the scandal by preaching a crusade; but it is not merely because these expeditions failed that we look back on such efforts to vanquish the unbelievers as evidence of misplaced zeal.

There were days when the spread of false opinions, coupled with dangerous laxity of morals, seemed likely to undermine the Christian faith, and earnest men busied themselves in organizing a holy office which should stamp out heresy; but, in the light of after events, we do not commend their wisdom now.

At the period when the Puritans in this country took seriously to heart the Mosaic command, *Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live*, they felt it was a duty to exterminate the blasphemy which pretends to exercise supernatural powers at will; but they, too, brought shame upon the Christian name.

For, indeed, it is not the part of Christ's church to root out evil, but to cultivate good, — to make the light shine till the darkness shall vanish away unheeded. And, assuredly, that same parable of the tares is not without a bearing on the mission of woman. It is hers to be good, and to do good; she is wasting her energy if she leads crusades against crime, if she sets herself to point out the extent of this evil, or to expose the heinousness of that sin.

Railing at evil is such a fatuous and futile method of trying to do good; we are bidden to be simple concerning evil, not to be curious about it, not to dwell upon it at all. Thus only can we hope to attain to genuine char-

ity — it thinketh no evil, it beareth all things, it hopeth all things, and covers a multitude of sins. In pure and tender hearts, to whom this grace is given, there glows a portion of that divine love which avails to win mankind from evil, and to save the lost.

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